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AN APPEAL TO TRADE UNIONISTS

NOTE CHANGE OF ADDRESS.
NATIONAL GUILDS LEAGUE,
39, CURSITOR STREET,
LONDON, E.C. 4.

Pres. exp. Prof. H.R. Kemp

Printed by H. Williams & Son, 222, Gray's Inn Road, London, W.C. 1,
for the National Guilds League, 17, Acacia Road, St. John's Wood,
London, N.W. 8.

NATIONAL GUILDS

An Appeal to Trade Unionists.

FREEDOM is recognised by all as a first condition of well-being. Freedom from oppression, opportunity for self-expression, the right to choose and control one's work and to enjoy a fair share in the fruits of it—the claim to these has inspired the workers in attempt after attempt to cast off their chains. The history of the last hundred years is the history of a struggle for freedom under the conditions created by the capitalist system. This struggle has had two aspects. On the one hand, there has been the struggle for political democracy and the assertion of the right of the community to exert its control over the actions of the profiteer. On the other hand, and above all, there has been the growth of the Trade Union movement, with its resistance to oppression and its claim to take labour out of the hands of capitalists and bureaucrats intent only on exploitation through the sinister operation of the "laws of supply and demand." Instinctively, the workers have felt that the well-being of the people rests on the creation of a strong organisation in the industrial field, and instinctively they have used the organisation they possess to fight, however blindly and imperfectly, for industrial freedom.

But hitherto, organisation has been used only to soften the harshest effects of profiteering, and no concerted attempt has been made to abolish the system once for all. The world groans under the iron heel of capitalism, and little relief is found in the misdirected and unsatisfactory State action that results from the sense of "social compunction." The worker still sells his sole possession—the labour-power of hand and brain—to the highest bidder; the owner of capital still reaps the increase, and the State exists, in the main, to protect not human life but property. Collective bargaining for defensive purposes has become recognised and respectable. Trade Unionism has indeed become an integral part of the social machine, and its strength as an "outside" critical force is on the increase. But the distinction between employer and employed remains absolute as ever; possessing class and working class confront each other across an impassable gulf; nothing in fact, has been done to make true freedom easier of realisation. Wherever we look, whether to private capitalism or to State and municipal enterprise, we find the same sharp division of status and function, the same control from above, the same selling of human power to the highest bidder, the same tendency for even the highest bid to approximate to the cost of subsistence. This is wage-slavery.

The Wage System.

Wage-slavery exists where the worker is regarded as a living tool, as part and parcel of the machinery of production, as hardly worth the cost of healthy maintenance because of the abundant "reserve of Labour," thus standing to his employer in just the same relation as

the machine he minds stands in to himself. Over all human life this relation of master and servant holds sway. Trade Unionism, as long as it continues to accept such relationship as natural and necessary, can only criticise from outside the action of the employer and can never make an end of wage-slavery. Only by reliance on economic power, only by the creation, out of the Trade Unions as they are to-day, of black-leg proof Industrial Unions, capable alike of attacking capitalism and of assuming the control of industry in its place, can the wage system be destroyed. For the wage system is based on the selling of Labour as a commodity, and its basis can only be destroyed by the creation of a Labour monopoly. Such a monopoly can come only through Trade Unionism; once gained, it will carry with it the downfall of capitalism, the destruction of autocratic and external control of industry, and the realisation of industrial freedom.

The first problem, then, that faces the workers is the creation of a revolutionary industrial movement, inspired by the idea of controlling industry and intent on overthrowing the servile relation of master and man. If we ask whether the Trade Unionism of to-day is fitted for this task, there can be but one answer. Disorganised by sectionalism, and shackled by their defensive policy, the Trade Unions fail to fulfil their real function—the creation of a society which will give democracy free play in every sphere. The historians of the Trade Union movement have defined a Trade Union as "a continuous association of wage-earners for the purpose of maintaining or improving the conditions of their employment." That conception must be abandoned, and for it must be substituted another and a more virile definition. Organised Labour must no longer rest content with acting as a brake on oppression; it must force its way into the management and control of industry. The Trade Union should be *an association of workers for the purpose of overthrowing the wage system and assuming the control of industry in conjunction with a democratised State.*

Craft and Industry.

Thanks to the ready acceptance, and to the persistence of the defensive idea, Craft Unionism has long held sway. Despite the rapid changes in industrial processes, despite the growing concentration of capitalist control, despite the continual encroachment of the semi-skilled machine-minder on the skilled trades, many Trade Unionists still think first of craft and only secondarily of class. A cotton-spinner in Lancashire, or a pattern-maker in a big engineering works, concentrates mainly, not on freeing himself and his fellows, but on raising his standard-rate and bettering his conditions. Towards the piecer and the labourer, these skilled craftsmen are in a position of employers, or at least superiors; they dread the competition of the lower grades, and they attempt to ward it off by ostracism and often by unfair treatment. This attitude must change, as, indeed, it is already changing, with the steady alterations in the methods of production. Gradually, Trade Unionists are being forced to adopt the industrial basis of organisation; gradually they are realising that, even for defence against the attacks of capitalists and bureaucrats, a better weapon than craft Unionism is needed. But, hitherto, the adoption of the "industrial" structure which has been forced upon some classes of workers has not brought with it a general belief in the revolutionary purpose of Labour's economic organisation. Union by industry will not necessarily lead to a new heaven and a new earth; without a change of spirit it will only stave off for a little while the coming of the Servile State. Unless the workers are inspired by a new object,

organisation by industry will bring them no nearer to emancipation or freedom. Take, for instance, the National Union of Railwaymen. Can it be denied that if its members set before themselves the definite object of securing control of the railways, and subordinated everythin g else to that end, its action would be far more effective than it is now? That they are awakening to a sense of the real need for control, we agree, but it is still a long step to setting this end above all other considerations. Throughout the Trade Union movement the position is fundamentally the same. The need is everywhere for the recapture of the spirit that moved Trade Unionism in the days of Owen—for the revival of the revolutionary ideal of control.*

Hand and Brain.

With this return to the revolutionary idealism of the Trade Union pioneers will come a widening of the whole Labour outlook. The end to be achieved is freedom for the whole community, and no narrow view of industry will serve as a means. Preoccupied with the problems of the manual worker, Industrial Unionists have been inclined to forget that the true Industrial Union must include everyone who is engaged in the industry concerned, whether he work with hand or brain. Labour organisation must not cease when every manual worker has been brought into the Unions; clerks and foremen, works managers and managers, stationmasters and draughtsmen, designers and architects must be enrolled in their appropriate Industrial Unions; for they are no less essentially a part of the industry than are the manual workers.

Again, Industrial Unionism means solidarity not in each industry alone. It implies, not the isolation of one industry from another, but the linking-up of all the organisations of producers in one solid body. For the end in view is not the aggrandisement of any group, but the national organisation of industry by the producers themselves in the interests of society as a whole.

Brain-workers, then, must play their part with manual workers in the struggle against tyranny and external control. Each industry must build itself up into a compact and solid organisation, and all industries must join hands in face of the common enemy. For the moment, indeed, effort must be mainly concentrated on organising the manual workers who are still unorganised and on bringing in the lower grades of professionals whose status and rates of pay make them the natural allies of the manual workers.

But in every attempt the ideal of complete solidarity must be kept constantly in view. Only a body including every grade can undertake the full management of an industry. Out of the fighting Industrial Unions will come the managing and producing Guilds, and Industrial Unionism is the first step towards National Guilds. In a free Society the organised producers must control their own life and work, and such control can come only through the development of Trade Unionism. Even with the existing machine, despite all its imperfections, the workers can take the first steps on the road to control. But this they can only do to good purpose if they are inspired by the ideal of full control. With that ideal in their minds, they can use the existing machine for the first beginnings, while they set about improving it for the great task that is before them.

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*See "Towards a National Railway Guild" and "Towards a Miners' Guild" and other N.G.L. pamphlets for further comments on this aspect of the question.

The Guilds.

Out of the Trade Unions must come the Guilds—by a change in purpose and structure, and by a widening of membership. What, then, will be the nature of these National Guilds and how will they differ from the Trade Unions of to-day? They will be, not defensive organisations confronting a profiteering master class, but organisations of workers standing in a defined relation to the community—no longer bargaining bodies, but controlling bodies. Instead of workshops run by private owners or by the State or by local authorities, instead of workshops in whose control the workers have no say, there will be self-government in industry—rules imposed not by external authority but by the workers on themselves. What is now accomplished—and muddled—by Factory Legislation will be arranged by the workers for themselves. Hours and conditions of labour will no longer be imposed by the private profiteer or by the State, but will be in the control of those whose lives they govern.

Take a private factory to-day, and what do you find? Workers with insecure jobs, taken on or dismissed by an employer whom they cannot control, ordered about by foremen whom they do not choose, making goods not primarily for the use of the community but for private profit, without control over the quality of what they make or over the processes by which it is made, out of work or in work not as they choose, liable to the consequences of over-production and under-production—in short, merely an element in the cost of production and not responsible partners in the conduct of industry.

Or take the position of the worker under a State Department, with more security in his job, and in some cases with better conditions of employment, but subject to an even more rigid discipline, with the right to strike curtailed, and, to that extent, with a status that is even lowered. Such a worker has still no control over his foreman, or over what he makes and how it is made—over the service he renders and the manner in which it is organised. Both in the private factory and under the State or Municipality, the employed person is able at the most only to protest at the risk of his job, and never to initiate or to control.

Contrast with this position that of a factory under National Guilds. Every worker in the factory would be responsible to his fellow-workers, producing to meet the needs of the community. His job would be secure; he would be subject to the control neither of capitalists or capitalists' nominees, nor of an outside official, appointed from above, but of his own fellows. He would be controlled only by men of his own choosing, making goods for use and not for profit, working the hours and under the conditions determined by his Guild, controlling the machine instead of being controlled by the machine, in a position to adapt large-scale production to the needs of both consumer and producer, and to relieve the monotony of labour. In short, he would be no longer a wage-slave, but a responsible and self-governing partner in industry. He would no longer be able only to protest against the worst abuses of a rotten system; he would be himself initiating and controlling production in a free and democratic organisation.

We have begun with the individual factory, both because the effects of the change from capitalism to National Guilds are easier to understand in the small unit, and also because the purpose of the Guilds is to give freedom to the individual worker at his work and in his factory. But it is important to realise that the Guilds will be

national, and that factories, mines, workshops, will be linked up in their appropriate National Guilds which will arise out of the national Trade Unions of to-day by way of the national Industrial Unions of to-morrow.

Freedom in the Guilds.

What, then, will be the relationship between a National Guild and the individual workshops of which it will consist? On the answer to this question depends the reality of the freedom Guildsmen seek to secure. National Trade Unionism, it is often said, tends almost inevitably to bureaucracy, and is easily dominated by the official. Will not National Guilds fall in the same way under bureaucratic control, and so make the freedom of the individual worker no less illusory than it is to-day?

The answer lies in a separation of function between a National Guild, as a whole, and the factories of which it will consist. Broadly speaking, we may say that the function of a factory will be production, and that of a National Guild co-ordination and exchange. Doubtless, the National Guild will deal with production to the extent of setting standards and laying down general conditions; but, in the main, the organisation of the actual making of goods or rendering of services will be in the hands of the individual factories. On the other hand, the National Guilds will be mainly concerned with exchanges in the sense that its task will be to adjust national supply to national demand. Thus the individual worker will have a very direct control over what concerns him most—the conditions of his actual working life. In exercising this direct control he will learn to control the larger unit of his National Guild.

Internal Organisation.

Guild organisation, then, if it preserves local initiative, will not be open to the charge of bureaucracy. In the first place, the Guild officials will be, not bureaucrats thrust on the industry from outside, but leaders, chosen locally and nationally by the members themselves. Moreover, the functions of local and national officials in the Guilds will not conflict as they too often conflict in Trade Unions to-day. It is not true in any sense to speak of bureaucrats in the Guilds. Bureaucracy implies the passivity of the governed and the remoteness of the governors, whereas the Guild system is designed to call out the activity of every Guildsman. The industrial unit is small enough, and manageable enough, for the will of the members to make itself felt. Industrial democracy is direct democracy; and its immediacy is a guarantee of freedom.

Clearly, any outline of Guild organisation is bound to be misleading, unless it takes into account the difference between industry and industry. In some cases the distinction between production and marketing is far less clear than in others; sometimes, as in building, the Guild will be producing entirely for local needs; sometimes, as on the railways, a very high degree of centralisation may be necessary. The balance between central control and local autonomy will vary widely in different industries; but in general the guiding principle should be to leave the pit, mill, factory, or workshop as free as possible in the actual business of production, while securing from the centre a national co-ordination of supply and demand. Centralisation for the getting of raw materials and the disposal of products as well as for

laying down general standards and conditions, is all to the good; but autonomy, locally and in the works, which alone will safeguard initiative and preserve valuable characteristics, is necessary, above all in industries that are making finished products for the individual consumer.

Just as the degree of centralisation will vary from industry to industry, there will be different methods of government within the Guilds. Throughout, the guiding principle must be that of industrial democracy. Foremen, works managers, and every Guild official or executive member will be chosen by the workers they will have to direct. Thus the workers in the various shops and factories will elect their own officials and committees, the workers in the districts will choose their district officials and committees, and the whole personnel of the Guild will directly or indirectly elect national officials and committees. Only in the case of purely technical advisers and experts does there seem to be any reason for varying the democratic principle of election from below. The expert must be chosen by a small body that can study the personal qualifications of each candidate; and in these cases it seems likely that the electors will be the committee, local or national, which the expert is to advise.

Again, each Guild and each factory will consist of a number of workers of various grades and crafts. An engineering works will include pattern-makers, moulders, fitters and turners, labourers, clerks, packers, and a host of others. If self-government in factory and in Guild is to be really effective, each craft must find representation on the governing body. Thus, the governing body of the works unit will probably consist of representatives from each shop and craft. As soon as a wider area is in question, a new problem arises. The Guild authority for a particular district, and still more for the whole national industry, has to reconcile and represent the interests of the various factories and of the various crafts. The National Executives, then, will probably include representatives of both districts and crafts. In doing this, they will be developing along the lines which Trade Unionism is following at the present time.

The Guild Congress.

We have spoken so far as if each National Guild would be an isolated unit, wholly independent of the rest. But, as we saw that Industrial Unionism implies not the isolation of each industry, but the linking-up of all in a strong central organisation, so the National Guilds will be united in a Guild Congress, which will be the lineal descendant of the Trades Union Congress as the Guilds will be of the Trade Unions of to-day. The main functions of the Guild Congress will be the co-ordination of the national production as a whole, the settlement of questions affecting more than one Guild, and negotiation with the State. The Guild Congress, as a body representing all the Guilds, will be the supreme authority on the side of the producers as the State will be on that of the consumers.

Nor must the local equivalents of the Guild Congress be forgotten. As National Guilds will have important relations one to another and to the State, so the local branches of the Guilds will have their relations one to another and to the local authorities in their districts. Out of the Trades Councils of to-day must grow the local Guild Councils of the future, and no small part of the task before Labour is the revitalising of the Trades Councils.

Disregarded to-day by the governing bodies of the great national Unions, the Trades Councils have to struggle hard to preserve their power and vitality. Here and there, indeed, they have been able to act as real co-ordinating bodies in local Trade Union life; but too often their industrial work is negligible, and they exist mainly as political bodies for the conduct of local elections. In many cases important Trade Unions hold aloof from them. Seldom, indeed, is anything done by the national Unions to encourage their branches to affiliate. Consequently, their functions are ill-defined and, for the most part, badly executed. Yet upon their future a great deal depends. Theirs should be the task of carrying out locally the centralised propaganda of the Trades Union movement. It is for them to play an important part in the elimination of the non-unionist. Gradually, they must become the centres of industrial activity in every district; and, for this, it is first essential that they should become really representative by including every Trade Union branch within their sphere of influence. They must become the arbiters in local disputes between Union and Union. In short, they must be for their districts what the Trade Union Congress ought to be for the whole country. But they can perform these functions only if they become a recognised and important part of the machinery of the industrial movement. In particular, the great mistake made by the Trade Union Congress in the nineties, when it excluded the Trades Councils from membership, must be remedied, and they must again take their place in framing the National Industrial policy of Labour. When they come to their own, their greatest service will be that they will make local feeling articulate, and will give a means of free expression to rank and file Trade Unionists. The more the Unions demand a share in industrial control, the greater will be the task and the power of the Trades Councils. On them, in great part, the smooth working and the reality of industrial democracy will depend.

The State.

With much that we have written so far the Syndicalist and the Marxian Industrial Unionist will agree.

"But" they will say "why drag in the State? The Unions and the Congress of Unions—or if you prefer it the Guilds and Guild Congress—can carry out all the functions of society—both economic and civic. The state is essentially an instrument of oppression. In the words of the Communist Manifesto it is 'but an executive committee for administering the affairs of the whole *bourgeoisie*', a Socialist society requires no State organisation, because it will have no privileged class. And with the consummation of the social revolution the State will die."

With this criticism of the State of to-day we are in agreement. We recognise that the State is the political expression of the economic system; but we do not jump from this criticism to the belief that no form of political organisation will be desirable in a free society. The Industrial Unionist case against the State as an institution is really a criticism of the State under capitalism, and does not apply to what Guildsmen mean by the State. We believe that the economic revolution will involve a political revolution; and that in changing the industrial, we must change also the political, structure of society in such a manner that these criticisms will become irrelevant to it.

There are, in the first place, many non-industrial functions which do essentially concern all the people living in an area, without refer-

ence to the particular industry in which they may happen to be engaged or, indeed to industry at all. We may instance, for example, the protection of the person, and the safeguarding of the interests of children.

In the second place the democratic organisation of industry implies a two-fold structure. The same man may behave quite differently according as he is organised as a producer or as a consumer —or, to use William Morris's phrase—as a maker or as a user. Moreover, the two methods of organisation—industrial and political—give different groupings of individuals. The industrial grouping is by trade, the political grouping by place of habitation. Both these groupings have industrial interests and functions, and the problem is to reconcile the two points of view. That is what advocates of National Guilds set out to do. The Industrial Unionist has claimed everything for industrial organisations, the Collectivist everything for territorial or political organisations. Both are open to the same criticism: you cannot reconcile two points of view merely by denying one of them.

To throw upon the Guilds the task of expressing both these points of view would be to introduce complexity and inefficiency into their working. They would be organised on industrial lines for purposes of production: and consequently their structure would be ill-adapted for other purposes.

The State and the Guilds are needed to represent not different people, but different points of view. They would have different economic functions to perform. The State and the local authorities would represent demand; the Guilds would represent supply. The State would own the means of production as trustee for the community: the Guilds would manage them, also as trustees for the community. The user, in deciding what he will use, would decide what is to be made. Indirectly he would control the product; but the maker would directly control the making of it.

In a Guild Society an organisation based on political grouping by locality will therefore be necessary. The political organisation would of course, be largely de-centralised and a great part of its functions would be exercised locally. The whole of it, local as well as national, we group for convenience sake, under the term "State."

The Division of Income.

Besides the two-fold functions we have noted, the State in a Guild Society will have an important part to play in arranging the division of the national income.

Clearly there will be necessary a continually functioning system of financial adjustment between the various Guilds.

Firstly, there will be certain Guilds—for example those concerned with public health and public works—which will provide some or all of their services free of charge to the consumer and which will therefore have to be maintained by a general levy on the other Guilds.

In the second place it will be necessary to secure the equitable distribution of the national income among all the members of the community, and so to prevent any one Guild from securing either by accident or design more than its fair share of the total product.

This adjustment will most conveniently be made in a twofold manner. In the first place prices will be based upon the cost of production. To the cost will have to be added public charges (*i.e.*, the

upkeep of the Civil Guilds and the State) and the amount needed by each Guild for division among its members and for current "capital" expenditure. And in the second place in order to correct the results of this round approximation it will be necessary to have a periodic adjustment which will take the form of levies on some Guilds and grants in aid to others. The natural basis for such an adjustment in a free society is equality of individual income. The adjustment between Guild and Guild would therefore probably aim at securing that the amount retained by each Guild should be proportionate to its membership.

The distribution of this collective Guild income among the members seems to be a matter for each Guild to decide for itself. Whether the Guilds would, sooner or later, adopt the principle of equal payment for every member, is open to discussion. What is clear is that the system of Guild taxation outlined above would make equality easier if any Guild desired to adopt it. It would be possible, under National Guilds, to get rid of the idea of payment for work done, and to substitute that of payment for Guild membership. Such an idea might lead to equality, or under it inequality might persist on a new basis, such as need or seniority.

All this business of making prices and adjusting Guild incomes is clearly a matter which concerns people as citizens. That is to say it is a matter in which both State and Guilds must have a say, and which will therefore best be effected by a system of joint committees. On some of these joint committees the central State body will be represented, on some local or municipal bodies: on some of them the Guild Congress, on some individual Guilds or groups of Guilds or Guild branches. Their constitution and powers will vary with their functions.

Moreover, under any system, a national revenue will have to be raised. Under National Guilds, this will be done by means of a levy on the Guilds. The State would declare the total revenue required for the year, and this sum would be apportioned among the various Guilds by a Joint Committee representing equally the State and the Guild Congress.

To these various joint-committees will naturally also come for decision any questions other than financial, on which both guilds and political organisations claim to have a say. They will, in fact, be general *liaison* bodies, which will probably develop important functions. But still they will remain definitely joint conferences of district organisations and in no way authoritative sovereign bodies exercising coercive jurisdiction. They will exist not for the coercion of, but for co-operation between, the State and the Guilds.

Types of Guilds.

In the main, the Guilds would be of two kinds, which we may call "civil" and "industrial." The former would include the great public services of Health and Education, the one embracing all grades of workers and professionals engaged in looking after the public health, from specialists to nurses and midwives, and the other all grades of teachers and every worker connected with the national system of education. The Civil Guilds and the Industrial Guilds would stand no doubt in somewhat different relations to state and local authorities. Such a service as Education for instance, while it would be directly controlled by the teachers, would probably have its own joint com-

mittees with the State and local authorities, similar in character and function to the joint committees between Industrial Guilds and those authorities, and at the same time different because of the different nature of the services concerned. The Industrial Guilds, on the other hand, would be those covering all the various branches of transport and manufacture. Some of these services the community might decide to give free, but the abolition of the wage-system and the setting up of real democracy would remove one great incentive to such communisation, which is now demanded largely as a means of subsidising low wages. If the national income is fairly distributed, it seems best to leave the individual as free as possible to choose for himself how he will spend his income.

Abolition of Profiteering.

This discussion of prices, products, buying and selling, and the like, may raise a doubt whether the establishment of National Guilds would really abolish profit-making. Would not the Guilds, it may be asked, be simply profiteers armed with a local or national monopoly? They would not, for three reasons. In the first place, prices would no longer be fixed by the power of monopoly or the higgling of the market, but by the decision of the community, expressed by the joint committees. In the second place, the amount retained by each Guild for distribution among its members would be determined, not by the conflict of economic forces, but by its membership taken in relation to the total national resources. In the third place, the pay of the individual Guildsman would be fixed by his Guild and not by what he could "fetch" in the labour market—*i.e.*, he would be no longer a commodity to be bought and sold. As a result of these three facts profit-making, which is the individual appropriation of surplus value, would cease. The community, and not any particular Guild, would reap the increase.

We have given a brief sketch of the position of the Guilds in a free society and have assigned to them definite functions in the national economy. We have now to consider how the Guilds can come into being, and more especially what changes in Trade Union organisation are needed to bring about that control of industry by the workers in which alone the individual and the community can find satisfaction and freedom. We need not insist further on the fact that craft Unionism is, by its very nature, unfit to assume complete control, nor need we repeat our arguments in favour of Industrial Unionism. But we must shortly survey the present position in order that the task ahead of Labour may be understood.

Trade Unionism To-day.

There are in this country over 1,100 Trade Unions, and very few of these are on industrial lines, There is, indeed. not a single case in which there is one Union covering a whole industry without important competitors. In the Building Industry there are about sixty competing, overlapping, and sectional Unions; in the Cotton Industry union by industry is unknown. On the Railways, though the National Union of Railwaymen, which is industrial in structure, has a large majority of the organised workers in the operative grades in its ranks, the fight

for complete Industrial Unionism is only just beginning; and in the Engineering and Shipbuilding Industry the conflicts between the Unions are as bitter as they have ever been. Even in the industries that are supposed to have the best organisation, sectionalism everywhere survives.

Nor is this the only problem; there are other industries in which multiplicity of Unions is less serious than lack of Trade Unionists. In Agriculture, for instance, organisation is still in its infancy. Yet already Agricultural Unions and general labour Unions are competing one with another without regard for right or expediency. Everyone knows that the weakness of Trade Unionism in the rural districts is a continual menace to the town worker, and that the strengthening of Agricultural Trade Unionism would at once mean a great accession of power to the whole movement.

Nor is the problem of the general labour Union confined to agriculture. In practically every industry it threatens to delay the coming of Industrial Unionism no less seriously than the craft spirit of the so-called "skilled" Unions.

In other pamphlets we put forward various suggestions for dealing with the present situation and for bringing Trade Union organisation more into harmony with the idea of control. Here we desire only to describe the facts. Before the Trade Unions can assume anything approaching the complete control of industry, Industrial Unionism must be brought into being, a real central authority must be created for the whole Trade Union movement, and, above all, those who are now unorganised must, by one means or another, be brought into line with their fellows.

The Unions' Next Step.

Hitherto, Trade Unionism has been content to concentrate its energies in certain industries, certain trades, or certain places. Whole sections of workers have been left practically untouched; the worst paid districts have often been abandoned to their fate. The result of this is that nine million workers are still un-organised. If these are to be brought in, it is certain that the work of organisation can no longer be left to individual Trade Unions; the movement as a whole must see to, and pay for, the elimination of the blackleg. Instead of a thousand petty organising campaigns, often in competition one with another, there should be one great organising campaign, centrally controlled and directed. Such a campaign could best be conducted through the Trades Councils, and a revival of the Trades Council movement is essential to its success.

Where Trade Unionism has succeeded in making itself more or less blackleg-proof already, the reasons are clear. Success has come either to a highly-skilled craft—in which case it has often been won at the expense of other sections—or to a Union that is in its essential features industrial. The Boilermakers are an example of the first type, the Miners of the second. But it is not enough to concentrate on particular crafts, or even on particular industries: what is needed is an all-embracing Unionism, and this can only be achieved by the united action of the whole Trade Union movement.

The gradual growth of the amalgamation movement, the gradual using of the craft idea by the class idea to the gradual acceptance of

control as the purpose of Trade Unionism, make the ultimate success of Union by Industry comparatively secure. Complete control, as we have seen, can come only with complete Industrial Unionism—with the inclusion in the Unions, not only of all manual workers, but of the salariat also. But, before that has come about, much can be done to lessen the authority of outside management in both private and public enterprise. As craft prejudice begins to give way, as the workers realise that only by complete unity can capitalism and wage-slavery be overthrown, reformism will give place to a more revolutionary ideal: the attempt to ameliorate will be replaced by the attempt to attain freedom through the destruction of the wage-system. With the change in Trade Union structure will go a change of spirit; but in a minority the change of spirit must precede and bring about the change in structure.

The Road to Control.

Even now the industrial weapon, whether it be the strike or negotiation backed by the threat to strike, can be used to secure a foothold in control and to pave the way for the assumption of management by the workers. Already, indeed, there are signs that this is happening. Miners and railwaymen have lost their belief that in mere nationalisation they will find freedom: miners, railwaymen, and postal workers are all beginning to demand that national ownership shall be accompanied by the securing of a share in control by the organised workers. They are no longer content to entrust their freedom blindly to the social conscience of the State: they demand that a change from private to public ownership shall mean for them, as workers, a change in status. They have realised that freedom is a possession worth infinitely more than good conditions of servility or better remuneration within the wage-system—however valuable these may be. They know that without democracy in industry there can be no real freedom.

What the workers in certain industries are beginning to understand, the whole Trade Union movement must understand. With this knowledge will come the determination to secure a blackleg-proof organisation, able to hold up industry, and so to secure from the employer, private or public, the rights and responsibilities of free producers.

There are not wanting means by which the existing organisation of Trade Unionism can be used to secure control. In the past Conciliation Boards have been used to tie the workers' hands. With their new ideal in mind, the workers can turn them to better purposes. The existing methods of conciliation must be replaced by negotiation of a different kind. First, every element of arbitration must be removed. All recourse to a supposedly "impartial" authority must be swept away. Conciliation must give way to negotiation in which the two parties may meet, without external interference, to settle their differences. Secondly, the sphere of negotiation must be extended. Whereas it is now often confined to questions of wages and hours, it must be widened to include every question that can arise between employers and employed, especially the all-important questions of "discipline" and "management." If these extensions are won and used, negotiation can be used to secure real industrial control, which, as the power of the workers increases, will be transferred to them from the employers. This, however, will never come about unless the

Unions keep intact the right to strike, on which their power depends, and unless long time agreements and long notices are scrapped together with "impartiality" and arbitration.

The battle to replace conciliation by negotiation will go on both nationally and locally, and on the growth of the power of the workers, locally as well as nationally, their ultimate success will depend. Locally, they have yet another method of beginning to secure control, and of undermining the existing system from within. In their factories and workshops, the workers must begin to struggle for the right to elect their own foremen. They must bring foremen, deputies, and overlookers into the same Unions as the rest of the workers; and they must strive to get questions of discipline settled by the Union and not by the employers. Again, they should hire out their labour, while they continue to hire it out, not individually, but through their Union. They should compel the employer to pay the Union or branch a lump sum, which the workers will divide among themselves as they think fit. Labour must be bought and sold, no longer piecemeal, but in bulk. A collective standard rate or piece-work price should, during the period of transition, take the place of the individual standard rate of to-day. Above all, the employer must be made to deal, not with the workman directly, but with the Trade Union.

These suggestions do not by any means exhaust the possible methods of securing a measure of control within the existing system; they are examples which serve to show in outline what can be done.

The State as Employer.

We have seen that the workers are ceasing to look upon mere nationalisation as an ideal to be striven for. The reason is obvious. The State and the municipality as employers have turned out not to differ essentially from the private capitalist. If in some respects they are often better, there are other respects in which they are undeniably worse. Events before the War had taught the workers much: experience during the War has taught them even more. Nor need we go to exceptional cases for our argument. The normal attitude of a Government department or a municipal body towards its employees is no better than that of the private employer. If it occasionally pays slightly better wages, or gives slightly better conditions, it is almost always far more despotic in its action. In public employment, the worker has less freedom than under private capitalism.

The only hope for the workers lies in controlling national and municipal, as well as private, enterprise. Political democracy by itself, even if it could come into being without industrial democracy to serve as its foundation, would never secure more than better conditions of wage-slavery. The only way in which the workers can secure freedom in their work is by fighting for control. To the worker as a worker, nationalisation is irrelevant: the State is no less an external authority in the workshop than the private capitalist. Let nationalisation come if it will. The business of the Trade Unions, under public and private management alike, is to secure control, whether they have to win it from the State or the private employer. *Economic power precedes political power*, and the road to freedom lies through industrial self-government.

The realisation of Industrial Unionism, the building-up of the whole body of Labour into one fighting force, and the utilisation of the machine so created for the securing of control, are the "next steps" that the Trade Union movement must take. When these have been taken, when the workers are united in their organisations and inspired by a common purpose, the wage-system will be doomed, and the man-machine of capitalism will become a free man in a free society, founded on that industrial self-government which is the basis of National Guilds.

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